



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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STATEMENT OF WILLIAM T. LAKE, CHIEF, MEDIA BUREAU, ON ORDER CONDITIONALLY GRANTING THE SINCLAIR ALLBRITTON TRANSACTION

Washington, D.C.: The Media Bureau today adopted an Order approving the \$985 million Sinclair/Allbritton transaction after the parties agreed to amend the proposal in three markets to comply with our ownership rules:

- Consistent with DOJ review, Sinclair will divest the station in the Harrisburg market.
- To comply with our local TV ownership rule, Sinclair will deliver the programming of stations in the Birmingham and Charleston markets via digital multicasting. This means that Sinclair will put the full programming of the stations on the digital signal of the stations it already owns. The licenses of the Allbritton stations that previously broadcast that programming will therefore be returned to the Commission. Most importantly, consumers will lose no programming currently available to them.
- The originally proposed sidecar arrangements with Howard Stirk Holdings and Deerfield will not be included in the transaction.
- To comply with our local TV ownership rule, Sinclair will terminate an improper sharing arrangement in the Charleston, South Carolina market.

The Order released today approving the transaction between Sinclair and Allbritton exemplifies the careful scrutiny the Bureau will provide to broadcast transactions that propose new combinations of sharing arrangements and financial entanglements between a dominant licensee and a so-called sidecar entity. The Media Bureau has demonstrated clearly that it will not allow such combined arrangements to undermine the local TV ownership rule, which is in place to ensure competition and diverse voices on the airwaves.

When the Commission adopted the Joint Sales Agreement Order in March, the Chairman announced a two-fold goal: to close off what had become a growing end-run around our local TV ownership rule, while ensuring prompt and careful review of proposed transactions that advance our public interest mandate. The Order released today is consistent with those goals and with our broader mandates to ensure continued access to programming and encourage competition in the marketplace. Consumers deserve access to as many truly independent broadcast voices as possible, and our actions in this area follow through on our commitment to that objective.

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